

# 'Bele Quadrant' as Philosophy of Life to Live in Harmony

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## Abstract

To live in harmony with the others and nature is the way of life of the **Buna'** people in Timor, Indonesia. Love each other is not only a philosophical or theological term for them. They practice it as a tradition. The root of this tradition of living in harmony is the object of our research done from 2005 to 2019, fourteen years.

The **Buna'** people is a local tribe, about 100,000 members live in the Island of Timor, Indonesia & the Democratic Republic of Timor.

Here we present the result of our study that they live for centuries on the basis of their way of life: **Nopil, Nawas, Nejel, Nimil**, in English: desire, reason, instinct and conscience. We named this four aspects: 'Bele Quadrant' as four parts of human being.

**Keywords:** 'Bele Quadrant', desire, reason, instinct, conscience.

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## INTRODUCTION

To live in harmony with the others and nature is the way of life of the **Buna'** people in Timor, Indonesia. Love each other is not only a philosophical or theological term for them. They practice it as a tradition. The root of this tradition of living in harmony is the object of our research done from 2005 to 2019, fourteen years. On last March 2019 we had dialogue with the elders of the **Buna'** tribe in Belu District and they once again stated that they are one with each other and with the nature because of their belief that they have contact with the others and the nature with their desire, reason, instinct, conscience.

The **Buna'** people is a local tribe, about 100,000 members live in the Island of Timor, Indonesia & the Democratic Republic of Timor. They live in Timor Island, and the location of this research is among the **Buna'** tribe in Belu District, East Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia.

Here we present the result of our study that they live for centuries on the basis of their way of life: **Nopil, Nawas, Nejel, Nimil**, in English: desire, reason, instinct and conscience. We named this four aspects: 'Bele Quadrant' as four parts of human being.

The **Buna'** tribe is a community about 100.000 people who divided into two communities, 25,000 people who live in the western Timor, Indonesia and about 75,000 live in the eastern Timor, a region of the new state, the Democratic Republic of Timor. Their language is **Buna'** and they call themselves by the name **Buna'** because they believe that their ancestors came to Timor from a place high in the sky, **Bun-bun**, and there was fiery, flashing as lighting as ember, **Na-na**, and they believe their first place was **Buna'**, from two words, **Bun-bun** and **Na-na**, **Buna'**.

Their ancestors came to Timor about 5th century BC because in their myths of genealogy they have story about bronze ornaments as an artefact of Yunan mainland in the South-eastern of Asia. Their language is very simple. Every vowel is a word: **a** means food, rice; **i** means we, to bite; **u**, means life, to live, the grass; **e**, means salt; **o**, means shrimp. Many words consisted only of two letters: **il**, means water; **en**, means human; **ho**, means the blood, to draw water; **he**, means fly; **bi**, means the star; **up**, means sugar cane; **pu**, means areca nut; **pe** means swollen. So the **Buna'** tribe has a very simple language, **Buna'** and someone in the next time could make a study about this language, whether it is an old language or may be one of the oldest and simplest language in the world.

## ETHNOMETHODOLOGY

In this research we used the quality research especially ethnomethodology based on grounded theory and emic approach. Three of us, myself and my two daughters are part of the **Buna'** tribe. I myself, Bele Antonius, born and lived my childhood as a **Buna'** people, whereas my two daughters, Grace Bele (41) and Agnes Bele (39) are the descendants the **Buna'** people living outside of the **Buna'** community.

Three of us undertook this research in order to know more deeply about the philosophy of life of the **Buna'** tribe as a rare and special tribe in Timor Island. We had dialogues and discusses with some **Buna'** elders and gathered their opinions by dividing enquetes to get answers for the questions we put forward, who are this **Buna'** tribe who could live happily for centuries in this remote Island of Timor?

## THE QUESTION

Why the **Buna'** people could live in harmony with the others and with the nature in their villages up to now? They are christian in religion but still adhere so closely to their traditional belief, *Hot Esen*. How they could combine these two religions, christianity and local belief in their daily lives?

From this question we ask ourselves, why in our modern society a person nowadays so easily envies and hurts and even kills other people in this world? Whether the word 'love' is only a lipservice which is used only in sermons and speeches in local and universal forum?

In this short article we present the philosophy of life of the *Buna*' people and after a long study, we named the philosophy, 'Bele Quadrant': a construction of human being personality consisted of four parts: the desire, reason, instinct and conscience.

## THE LITERATURE REVIEW

The peaceful living is a yearning of everybody in this world. Everywhere nowadays each group of human being is longing and achieving hard a peaceful life. There is a strong drive to gain peace starting from person to person, from family to family and in a more wider circle all of us are striving for peace in local, regional, national up to international level. The pursuit of peace comes in to no avail. We are losing our hope, (Hans Küng & Kuschel, 1993, 'A Global Ethic').

The modern society is losing its sense of humanity because of the neglection of the spiritual capital in its organization according to Danah Zohar dan Ian Marshall, 2004. They stated that each person has four capitals: material, intellectual, social and spiritual capital. In every organization everyone has to harmonize these four capitals in his/or activity to gain success.

Starting from this opinion of Danah Zohar and Ian Marshall, from 2005 to 2011, I made a qualitative research among the *Buna*' people in Timor. Then I found that the *Buna*' people lived a peaceful life for centuries not only because of using these four capitals, but they practised their way of life where they believed that every person has in his or her innerself four factors, the **desire** to contact with material capital, the **reason** to maintain their needs, the **instinct** to live in harmony with the other people and the **conscience** to scrutinize his or her activities whether good or bad.

## THE NEW THEORY: 'BELE QUADRANT'

It is a question of human being to live a peaceful living but in reality the egotism ruins every hope to live peacefully. The '*Bele Quadrant*' stretches out a clue to this crucial point of unpeaceful living to a peaceful living among us now in this ultra-modern society.

'*Bele Quadrant*' is a simple theory formulated by myself assisting by my lecturers in a long and tiring study from 2005 to 2011 in the Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, Java, Indonesia. It was a result of the study in the Post Graduate Inter-diciplinary of Sciences Faculty in this University. In this theory, I divided human personality into four aspects: **4 Ns** in Indonesian words, *Nafsu*, *Nalar*, *Naluri*, *Nurani*, can be translated, desire, reason, instinct and conscience.

Every person has to execute these four aspects in a harmonious way in other he or she can live peacefully in brotherhood or sisterhood in his or her everyday life.

In this paper, three of us, myself, *Anton Bele*, and my two daughters, *Grace* (41) and *Ina* (39) present the result of our recent research undertaken from 2018 up to this year, 2019, and we have found out that the implication of this theory can make a peaceful living among the human society in our everyday life.

## THE *BUNA*' TRIBE'S PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE

The *Buna*' tribe in Timor, live in another way of life-philosophy and world-view. Their philosophy is different with the western philosophy. They live in a world without division into two parts, heaven and earth, good and evil.

In the dialogue with the elders of the *Buna*' tribe in Timor, they stated that they live with their desire to live happily, they have to act according to the reason rationally and they keep their family life instinctively and they consider their daily deeds by their conscience whether good or bad.

In their everyday life they render and offer this four aspects to "*Hot Esen*" (The Highest Sun) in their daily prayers dan offerings. They have no Sunday. For them, all the days are sacred. The environment is sacred. The hills, the big trees, the springs, the animals, the herds are sacred because the nature with all each parts, has its own patron, the good spirits.

The good spirits protect the nature from the bad spirits and the wicked men who destroy the nature will be punished by the good spirits. All the calamities and illnesses are from the bad spirits. The prosperity is from the Supreme Being, *Hot Esen*, who gives delegation for the good pirts to controll the nature and the life of the people. They live in harmony with the people and the nature. The harmony of life based on these four aspects: **desire, reason, instinct and conscience.**

I myself am a member of this tribe, *Buna*' and after a long research from 2005 to 2011, I found the core of the *Buna*'s philosophy and I composed it in a new theory, 'Bele Quadrant', in *Buna*' language, the terms used among them: *Nopil*, means my strength; *Nawas*, my knowledge, *Nejel*, my womb, *Nimil*, my heart. Then I transfer into Indonesian: *Nafsu* (the desire), *Nalar* (the reason), *Naluri* (the instinct), *Nurani* (the conscience).

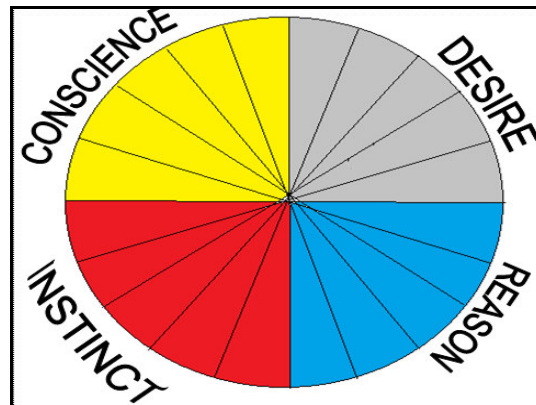


Diagram 1: Bele Quadrant of human personality

The 'Buna' tribe in their tradition, live in harmony on the basis of four aspects of humanity: Nopil, Nawas, Nejel, Nimil.

Nopil means my strength. Each person lives by using his/her strength to earn everything he/she needs. Nawas means my reason. They have common knowledge to interpret the surroundings of their life. Nejel means my womb, explaining that every human being is born from a woman so every body is from the same root and by this sense someone has to love the other people as brother and sister who have family tie. To love each other as human being is the core of this term, Nejel, my womb. Nimil means my heart. A 'Buna' person will say, "Neto nimil pisi", means, "My heart is pure". These four aspects of human being are dedicated to the ancestors, good spirits and the Supreme being, 'Hot Esen'. The Buna' people have the responsibility to live honestly before their ancestors, good spirits and Hot Esen.

They believe that they could live happily as a result of implementing of these four aspects human being: Nopil, Nawas, Nejel, Nimil.

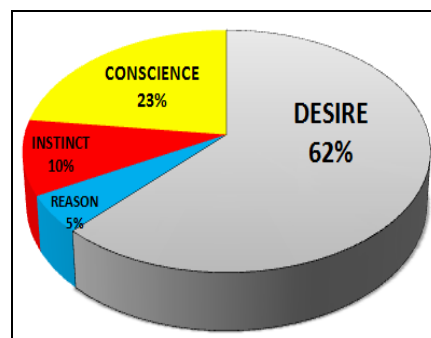


Diagram 2. The Percentage of human activity measured with Bele Quadrant in Timor, March 2019



Diagram 3: the ideal type of the human personality measured with Bele Quadrant

## A CORRECTION

The axiom that the human being is divided into two aspects body and soul is not enough to cover our deeds. I am correcting this axiom and offer a new theory, 'Bele Quadrant' in which I have an opinion that the human person is consisted of four aspects: desire, reason, instinct, conscience, not only two aspects, body and soul.

I make a correction to the axiom 'human is a creature consisted of body and soul' because according to me, the term is not enough to cover the being of a human person. Up to now we are usual with this explanation:

body is transitory, soul is eternal. In the western philosophy and theology this concept is accepted as a universal axiom and undebateable. The christianity teaching is based on this philosophy and all the life-circle is divided into this dualistic concept: good & bad, holy & evil, heaven & hell, human & spirit, saintly & sinful, worldly & divine. This division makes many believers, especially the christians, to behave wordly from Monday to Saturday and on Sunday a christian will have a week-end to wipe out all his or her wordliness by confessing his/her sins before God in the Eucharist celebration. Six days to live in the world and on Sunday live with God. Heavenly songs and devout prayers and heartfull offerings turn all the christian hearts to God and for awhile they forget to be angry to his/her brothers and sisters, and brotherly love showed inside the church by handshakes dan kissings. After that, six days are there to go into the world and contact with the sinfull surroundings.

So I have a suggestion to make a new reflection about the philosophy, the human being divided into two sides, body and soul. Human being is consisted of four parts, **desire, reason, instinct** and **conscience**.

## CONCLUSION

The human body is filled with these four parts and The Creator grants life, transitory in this world and eternal after death. Human being is one with four parts and with the desire everybody hopes to be united with God, with the reason everybody knows God, with his instict everybody will live face to face with God dan with his conscience everybody loves God in the eternal life.

## EXCLAMATION

Herewith we exclaim to everybody that this environment with its earth, air and water is ours so with our **desire** to conquer it, share it with each other peacefully! We have our **reason** to settle the surroundings accordingly and please hand in hand we arrange and use the nature properly! We are one in this world so embrace each other with our **instinct** to make sure that each of us has the right to get place to shelter on to get some crumbs of bread to eat. We have our **conscience** put in our hearts by our Creator to love each other so we have to be aware that we are travelling in this transitory world to reach the lovingly eternal home prepared for each of us. God bless us!